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Heath announces new transportation funds for Silver Comet Trail

ATLANTA – State Senator Bill Heath (R-Bremen) announced today that the city of Cedartown has been awarded \$750,000 in Transportation Enhancement (TE) program funds for fiscal year 2006 (FY06) and fiscal year 2007 (FY07) for the 11th U.S. Congressional District. The TE program funds have been earmarked for an improvement project that will close approximately one-half of the remaining gap in the Silver Comet Trail between Rockmart and Cedartown.

“Senator Heath was very instrumental in making this happen,” said Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl, as the announcement was made this week. “Bill Heath and State Transportation Board (STB) Chairman David Doss have played a huge role in bringing this funding to Polk County and to the 11th Congressional District,” added Commissioner Linnenkohl.

The TE program is federally funded and was originally established in 1991 by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). The program was continued by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) passed in the fall of 2005, and provided the program with further federal funding. The Georgia DOT Office of Planning manages the TE program in Georgia.

“These improvements will be very beneficial to our community,” stated Sen. Heath. “I must also commend Congressman Phil Gingrey (R-Georgia) for his efforts in securing this funding. This money will truly be welcomed by the people of Cedartown and Polk County.”

There are 12 eligible activities that can be funded by the TE program, including multi-use facilities such as walking and biking trails or paths; streetscaping and landscaping projects in cities and towns; historic preservation of transportation-related facilities like railroad depots; and the preservation of scenic views and byways. During the 2005 TE call for projects, the state DOT received a total of 275 eligible applications representing combined requests statewide of over \$220 million in federal funds for all 13 congressional districts by the September 23, 2005 deadline. Various legislators within the 11th Congressional District readily worked to obtain this funding for much-needed TE projects in their areas.

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Sen. Bill Heath represents the 31st Senate District, which includes all or parts of Bartow, Haralson, Paulding and Polk Counties. He may be reached at 404.463.1361, or by email at billheath@billheath.net.